



**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

March 27, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Patricia S. Ploehn, Director

Ploehn

SEPTEMBER 26, 2006 BOARD ITEM #18: SKID ROW ASSESSMENT TEAM

On September 26, 2006, your Board discussed recommended expenditures for the Housing and Homeless Program Funds. During the discussion, Supervisor Yaroslavsky instructed the Department of Children and Family Services to submit a report every 60 days to ensure that the activities of the Skid Row Assessment Team (SRAT) are within the law (i.e., as it applies to child protective services) and the Team is not detaining children inappropriately, and to use numbers and percentages to summarize the services. This is the second of the recurring 60-day reports.

In a report submitted to your Board on December 28, 2006, we reported that the number of referrals to the Child Protection Hotline for the Skid Row area was 36 and 15 referrals respectively for the months of October and November 2006. Further, we reported that the percentage of County Detentions for those months was 2% and .3%. An updated calculation, based on more appropriate comparison data, indicates that the percentage of detentions in the Skid Row area verses the percentage of Detentions County-wide for the month of October 2006 is 2.54% while the percentage for November 2006 is .36%.

The following table shows that the number of referrals and detentions from the Skid Row area for the months of December 2006 through January 2007.

Month	Total Referrals*	SRAT Referrals (Sub-Total)	Total Children *	Referrals made on existing case	Referrals resulting in new case	Total children detained	% of County Detentions for this month **
Dec. '06	12	9	47	1	2	2	.3
Jan. '07	12	5	35	3	4	8	.94

*Please note that the number of referrals is the number of families. The number of children is the total count of children within those families for which referrals were made.

**Percentage is an estimate and may change slightly in the next couple of months as information is finalized on CWS/CMS.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Upon review of the data from 2006, we may draw a number of observations. First, the number of referrals from the Skid Row area generated by the Child Protection Hotline is within the expected variance. Last year the average number of referrals per month for the Skid Row area was 15.08 with a range from 3 to 37 referrals per month. Second, the number of referrals that resulted in detentions in the Skid Row area is also consistent with the statistics from the year of 2006. It is also noteworthy that of the six families referred to in the table above where the children were detained, only one of the referrals was generated by a call to the Child Protection Hotline from the SRAT. The other referrals that resulted in detention of the children were from calls made by other concerned parties in the community.

Another way to look at the removal and detention rate is from the perspective of the number of individual contacts that the Team had with the homeless families on Skid Row. As indicated below, for the months of December and January, the Team had approximately 380 contacts with the families they serviced. Through these contacts, the Team only suspected abuse in 14 cases. Of the 14 incidents in which the Team called the Child Protection Hotline, only one investigation resulted in removing the children from the family.

In order to keep the Board apprised of the numbers of new families encountered by the SRAT on Skid Row since the inception of the project, the following table is submitted. It provides data on the new families that have been encountered by the SRAT from January 18, 2005, to January 31, 2007.

Location	January '05 to September '06	Oct. '06	Nov. '06	Dec. '06	Jan. '07	January 2005 to January 2007	Total
Midnight Mission	331	10	23	19	5		388
SRAT	450	0	0	4	0		454
URM	124	7	5	9	7		152
Weingart	182	1	0	0	0		183
	1087	18	28	32	12		1177

Please note that there was a significant decrease in the number of new families encountered by the Team in the month of January 2007. However, the SRAT continues to work with families who remain on Skid Row, or who have subsequently returned to Skid Row.

During the months of December and January, the SRAT provided approximately 380 services to the families they encountered. These services are documented in the Permanent Housing Assistance Services database. The services to the families may include the following: referring the family for counseling to address domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health issues; linking the family to a resource such as a food or clothing bank; referring the family to a housing locator through the Weingart Center or Beyond Shelter; providing a support service; completing an assessment; creating an individualized housing and services plan; referring the family for and/or completing an assessment to address mental health, physical health, or child abuse issues.

On December 18, 2006, the contract between the County and Beyond Shelter was signed and on January 18, 2007, they began accepting referrals from the SRAT. The following table

reflects some of the activities on the referrals that were generated from the SRAT to Beyond Shelter for the month of January 2007.

Total Referrals For Emergency Housing	Families placed in hotels	Families Placed in shelters	Families placed in Master Leased Apartments	Families declining emergency Shelter	Families with special needs	Intensity of Service Needs			
						High	Moderate	Low	Pending/ In the assessment process
22	14	2	11	3	11	3	3	9	5

It is interesting to note that a small number of the families referred to Beyond Shelter are declining the assistance of emergency housing. They state a number of reasons for declining which include: their desire to reside in the Union Rescue Mission in order to be eligible for the Hope Gardens project; their uncertainty about the type of services they will receive through Beyond Shelter; and there is no requirement to spend any additional money while residing at the mission(s).

The next phase of implementing the Beyond Shelter contract includes expanding procedures and protocols for staff to access emergency housing after normal business hours.

Finally, in order to progressively inform your Board of the activities of the Skid Row Assessment Team, we proposed in December 2006 to prepare a monthly report to your designated Deputies for the previous month's activities. As agreed, we have submitted the first report covering the month of December 2006. The report included a case summary for three families assessed by the Team. The initial feedback from your Deputies regarding these summaries indicates that they successfully demonstrate the impact of the Team on families on Skid Row.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Armand Montiel at montia@dcfs.lacounty.gov, or (213) 351-5530.

PSP:SK
 TR:vm

c: Chief Administrative Officer
 County Counsel